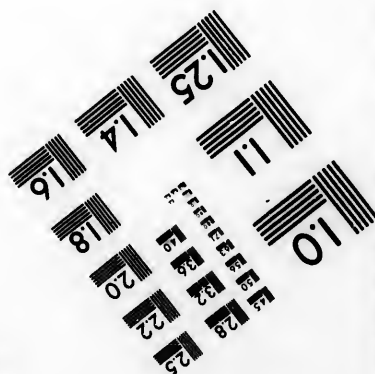
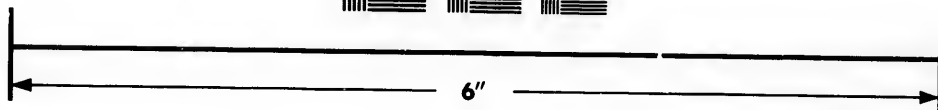
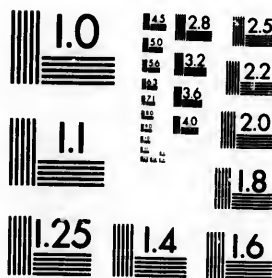


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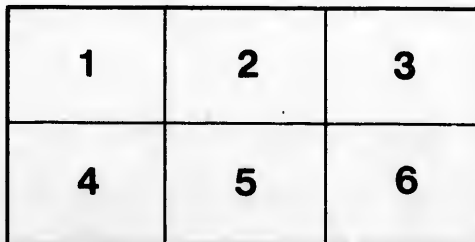
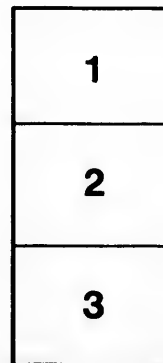
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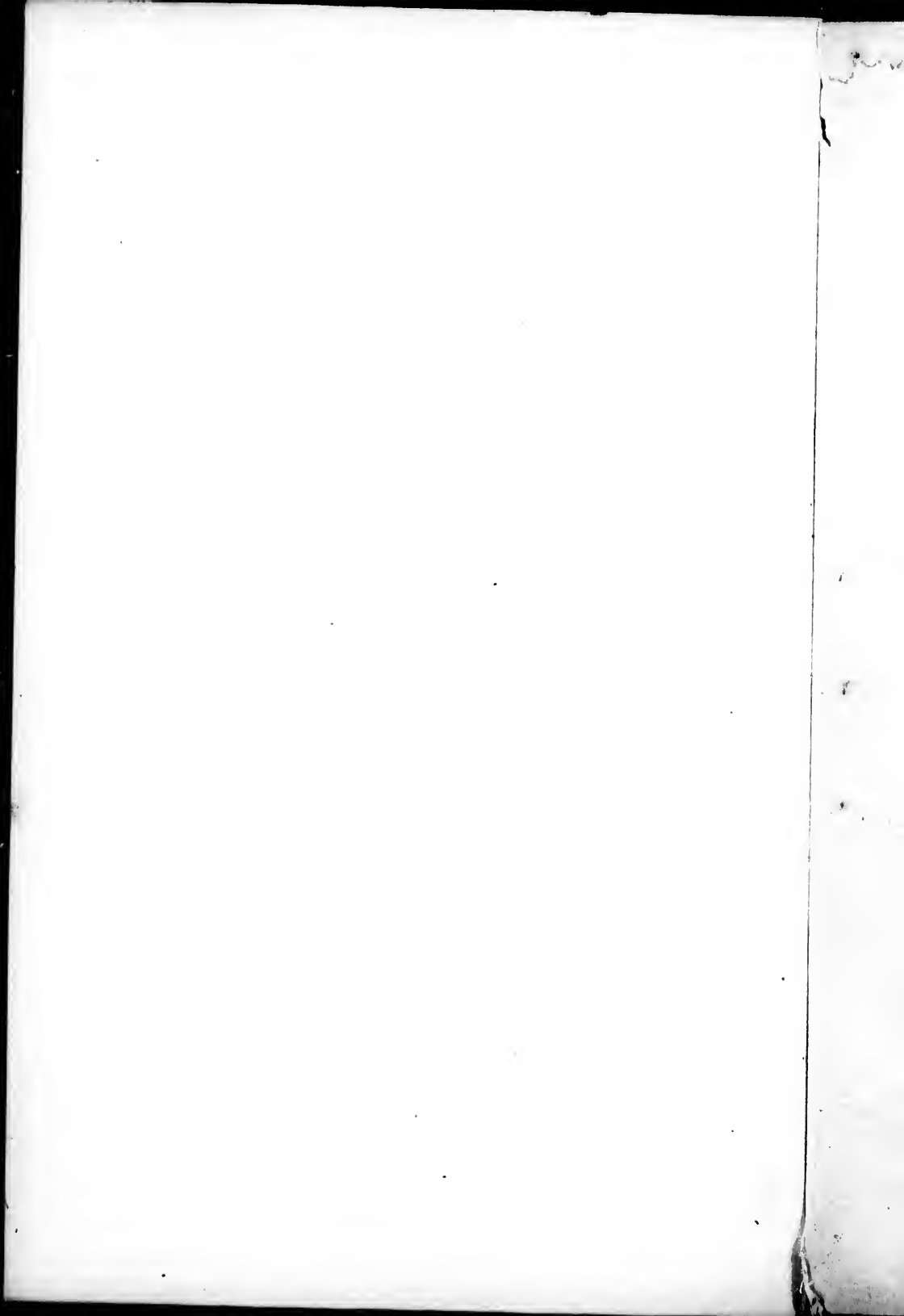
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BY JOHN BRADFORD, A. B.

LATE OF WADHAM-COLLEGE, OXFORD; CHAPLAIN TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

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Matt. xxiv. 14.—*This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the  
World for a Witness to all Nations.*

1 John i. 3.—*That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.*

1 Tim. iii. 16.—*Without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness; GOD  
manifest in the Flesh—justified in the Spirit—seen of Angels—preached unto  
the Gentiles—Believed on in the World—received up into Glory.*

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TO THE  
INHABITANTS  
OF  
New Brunswick, Nova-Scotia,  
IN  
NORTH AMERICA.

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MY BELOVED BRETHREN,

**B**EING called upon, in Providence, to assist at the ordination of two young men, for the work of the ministry, who are intended to serve in the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, more immediately among you ; it is the particular request of that highly-honoured and elect Lady, the Countess of Huntingdon, (of whose real concern and regard for your precious and immortal souls this mission is the best proof) that I should address you, in a few lines, on the reality and importance of those truths, the knowledge and enjoyment of which is necessary to your present and everlasting happiness.—I would therefore endeavour, by the manifestation of the truth, to commend myself to your hearts and consciences in the sight of GOD.

As my only end and aim is to promote the real welfare of your souls, I have only this request to make, that you would consult the Bible and your own hearts, to see whether these things are so. The LORD, in mercy,



cy, has sent you his precious Gospel: it will be your happiness to hear and receive it; but, woe be unto you, if you put it from you, and cast the word of GOD behind your backs. Consider—How will you escape, if you neglect this great salvation, of which the Gospel speaks? Do you not know that the judgment of GOD, which is according to truth, is against those who have committed such things, of which you know yourselves to have been guilty? Do not your consciences, at times, testify against you? Have you not awful apprehensions of that infinitely just and holy GOD, the great and universal Law-giver, whose laws you know that you have broken? How will you avert his wrath? How will you escape his avenging sword?—Salvation, and the forgiveness of sins, is preached in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.—He who believeth in Him, is justified from all things—He who believeth not, is condemned already. You may depend upon it, if you die under that sentence, you have nothing to expect, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. Let me beseech you, therefore, to consider the things which make for your peace—To consider, not only the uncertainty of life, but the certainty of that destruction, into which you must inevitably sink, unless you obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help, before it is too late.—Now is the accepted time—Now is the day of salvation—There is no redemption in the grave, where you are going; if you are not converted in this life, depend upon it, you can never enter into the kingdom of heaven; for so our LORD has said, Matt. xviii. 3. And in another place he says, John iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD.*

Let me ask—What do you know of conversion and the new birth? Of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto  
righteousness?

righteousness? What do you know of any change made upon your hearts? St. Paul says, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *By beholding, as in a glass, the Glory of the LORD, we are changed into the same image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD* And again, Tit. iii. 5, 6. *According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST, which He shed on us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* Without this change, (for the Scripture cannot be broken) it is impossible for you to go to heaven; and, if you do not go to heaven, the alternative is, you must certainly go to hell.

I do not suppose but you have some secret hopes of heaven and happiness; but I would call upon you to examine and search diligently whether those hopes are well grounded, or whether they are vain and delusive. That hope which maketh not ashamed, springs from true and saving faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST—from that faith which always works by love—for, thereby the love of GOD is shed abroad in the heart by the HOLY GHOST: but perhaps you know so little about the love of GOD shed abroad in the heart by the HOLY GHOST, that you do not so much as know whether there be any HOLY GHOST; and are willing to believe that you always loved GOD—that you never knew what it was to hate him and his Gospel. If this is the case, I am persuaded for my own part, that he who never knew the plague of an evil heart of unbelief, never knew what it was to believe savingly in the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and he who never knew what it was to hate GOD and his Gospel, never knew what it was to love him: for, as we are by nature children of wrath, a reconciliation must needs take place before it is possible for us to love him—As the carnal mind is enmity against GOD, that enmity must needs

needs be slain before we can possibly delight in him, and enjoy sweet communion and fellowship with him.

Doubts and fears always prevail, more or less, according as unbelief prevails more or less; but the Apostle speaks very differently of the effects of faith, when he says, that there is all joy and peace in believing. In proportion to the strength of our faith, so will our comforts abound, so will our corruptions be subdued, so will our affections be set on things above, and so shall we be enabled more and more to glorify GOD in body, soul, and spirit.

Doubts and fears, uncertainty and suspense, for which too many plead, are the workings of unbelief, and the struggles between law and conscience. When a convinced sinner is put upon his trial, and arraigned in the court of his own conscience, he cannot be satisfied with inferences, conclusions, and suppositions, till the business is decided, and the trial is brought to a certain issue.

Let me ask, do you not find this suspense truly awful? In vain you attempt to drive away those painful and alarming thoughts which at times arise in your mind—in vain you try to stifle convictions, and speak peace to your souls; when you are under the greatest distress of soul, then you fear the worst, and when you feel but little concern, then you are ready to suppose that you are given up to hardness of heart. Whilst you go on in suspense and uncertainty as to the salvation of your souls, you may not be able to say from what cause all these horrors spring, yet when delivered from the law, you will see the authority, the majesty, the glory of the law, as the ministration of condemnation, in the effect which it has upon the mind and conscience of an awakened sinner.

You will say, perhaps, that assurance is the peculiar privilege of some very extraordinary characters and highly favoured

favoured faints—that it is by no means essential to *faith*, though it may be essential to your *comforts*. It cannot be denied, without denying the Scriptures, that there are degrees of faith; yet it is much to be feared that many, who have no faith at all, would fain persuade themselves that they are good believers, under the notion of weak faith, or little faith. Whereas the least degree of Gospel Faith partakes of the nature of assurance, and the highest degree of faith is mixed with unbelief. The strongest believer, who gives most glory to GOD, will always pray for an increase of faith; seeing that to every one is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST; and GOD deals to every man the measure of faith, dividing to every one severally as he will.

Many are willing to believe that they believe, though they have not the least knowledge or experience of the true nature of saving or justifying faith. For instance, one supposes himself to be a true believer, because he believes in the being and existence of a GOD: whereas, it is one thing to believe that this world, and all that it inherits, was created by a Being infinitely wise and powerful, as the great First Cause of all; and it is another thing to believe that GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself.

The belief of a GOD, the Creator, Preserver and Upholder of all things, almost universally prevails; for, the knowledge of GOD (as it respects his eternal power and Godhead) may be learnt by the things which He hath made; for the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth his handy work: but if we know no more of GOD than what we know naturally as brute beasts, how can it be said that we know him of whom we cannot form the least conception, not even the most distant idea? The heathens of old acknowledged that there was a GOD,  
yet,

yet, St. Paul says, *they glorified him not as GOD, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools.*

The true nature of faith can only be determined by its Object. The Object of saving or justifying faith is the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself—God and man—As GOD was manifest in the flesh, and dwells bodily in the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, so GOD can only be known as a GOD in CHRIST; and CHRIST can only be known as revealed to the soul by the HOLY GHOST. This is the great mystery of godliness—GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH; and this is the mystery of faith, to see GOD in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us. There is no knowledge of GOD, without a knowledge of CHRIST; for our LORD says, Matt. xi. 27. *No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* And again, John xiv. 6, 7. *No man cometh to the Father but by me: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.* We read, John i. 18. *No man hath seen GOD at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.* And it is said, John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast sent.* Our LORD's answer to Philip, who said, *Shew us the Father,* is very remarkable; John xiv. 9. *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*

As GOD can only be known as a GOD in CHRIST, so CHRIST can only be known as revealed to the soul by the HOLY GHOST. St. Paul prays, Eph. i. 17. *May the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the FATHER of Glory, give you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation unto the knowledge of him:* and 2 Cor. iv. 6. he says, *GOD, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST.* Our LORD says, John xiv. 20. *In that day (i. e. when the Spirit shall be poured out upon them) ye shall know that the Father is in me, and I in him.* It is said, 1 Cor. xii. 3. *No man can call JESUS Lord but by the HOLY GHOST.* Let these Scriptures be compared together, and you must acknowledge that GOD can be known in no other way, than as dwelling in the person of CHRIST; and that CHRIST can be known in no other way, than as revealed to the soul by the HOLY GHOST.

As to all that can be said concerning faith, as being the belief of the Truth, if CHRIST himself is the Truth intended, the definition is just; for He who said, *I am the Truth*, said to his disciples, *Ye believe in GOD, believe also in me.* But if by the belief of the Truth, is meant the assent of the understanding to certain facts, certain propositions, or certain sentiments or opinions, as true, without any particular application to the soul, this account of faith is delusive, because the written word, rather than the incarnate Word, seems to be the object of this faith; and because the office of GOD's Spirit, in this account, seems to be superseded; for here is no manifestation of the Spirit, whose office it is, *not to speak of himself, but to take of the things of CHRIST, and shew them unto us.* As to all that can be said, respecting our duty to believe what GOD reveals, upon the credit of the divine veracity, I would ask,

B

Where

Where is the proof of the divine veracity, without a particular application to my soul by the Spirit? I can clearly prove, that it is possible for a man to be fully persuaded, in his own mind, that the Scriptures are the words of life, and a revelation from GOD, and yet be destitute of saving faith. Was not this the case with king Agrippa? St. Paul knew that king Agrippa believed the prophets; yet king Agrippa, by his own confession, was but an almost Christian.—Our LORD said to the Jews, *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of Me*; but, says he, *Ye will not come to ME that ye may have life.*—May we not fairly conclude from hence, that the Jews, though they believed the Scriptures to be the word of life, yet they did not savingly believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The record that GOD hath given us is eternal life, as to its intent and meaning; but this eternal life is not in the record, (which is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness) but this life is in his Son: this is the *true GOD and eternal life. Whofo hath the Son, hath life, and whofo hath not the Son, hath not life.*

St. Paul calls faith an evidence, *i. e.* the voice or testimony of GOD's Spirit, witnessing to the truth and reality of those things which no natural man can possibly discern, but which, saith the Apostle, *he has revealed to us by his Spirit.*—Our LORD calls the HOLY GHOST a Witness, John xv. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me.* We read, Rom. viii. 16. that *the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of GOD.* And 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth hath the witness in himself.* It is only by the testimony and evidence of GOD's Spirit that we can come

to any certain knowledge respecting the mind of GOD, and the way of salvation by JESUS CHRIST. A natural man may adopt a set of notions and opinions—he may make himself acquainted with a variety of systems and sentiments—but he knows nothing savingly of the Truth as it is in JESUS; neither does he experience the power of the Gospel. He may learn to talk about JESUS CHRIST, and the things of GOD, as a blind man may learn to talk about colours. A man who has never tasted honey in his life, from the report of others, takes it for granted that it is very sweet, and from what he has heard others say, he may describe the properties of honey; but he only who has tasted the sweetness of honey himself, can be a proper judge of its true flavour: just so, very excellent things may be spoken of JESUS CHRIST, by one who never felt the saving efficacy of his blood; but he only, who knows the LORD for himself, can be a proper judge of that peace which the Gospel brings, when received in power.

This is a point of the first importance, and as such it must be insisted upon, namely, that we can know nothing of GOD—nothing of the mystery of his will—nothing of the mystery of the Gospel—of the mystery of Godliness—of the mystery of GOD, and of the FATHER, and of CHRIST—that we can know nothing of the mystery of faith, but as we are divinely taught, and spiritually enlightened. St. John says, 1 John ii. 27. *Ye need not that any man teach you, but the anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lye.* This is the express tenor of the new covenant, *They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD; i. e. one man shall not impart the knowledge of GOD to another; but, saith the LORD, They shall all be taught of Me,*



*and they shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest. To this very end our LORD promised to send the Comforter. John xiv. 26. But the Comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things*

There can be no real satisfaction in the mind, as to the truth or reality of any thing, without that evidence or conviction, which produces certainty or confidence. The truths of GOD are so far beyond our natural capacity, or comprehension, that, without that evidence or conviction, which arises from the revelation of GOD's Spirit, we can have no confidence nor certainty respecting them; *for the things of GOD knoweth no man, but the Spirit of GOD; and the Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of GOD,*

The LORD undoubtedly makes use of means. It is said, Rom. x. 14. *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent? How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*—Preaching, and the LORD's supper, are clearly instituted by CHRIST himself; yet it is a dangerous mistake, to suppose that religion consists in the observance of these, or any other outward privileges; for though the Spirit, in the use of these means, is pleased to convey instruction and consolation to the souls of men, yet the kingdom of GOD is within you: *It is not in meats or drinks, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST,* felt and experienced in the soul. This is true religion:—ordinances are subject to us—for our use and benefit. We are not subject to ordinances—as if religion consisted in the observance of these. Modes and forms of worship may lawfully be used for the sake of decency and order, and for Christians to neglect the assembling themselves together,

together, for the purposes of religious worship, and spiritual edification, is highly reprehensible; yet, it is to be feared, that too many rest in an outward form, denying the power.

Let me ask, What do you know of the power?

The real power of GOD, in its first effect upon the soul, is always found to alarm the conscience—the SPIRIT, revealing the purity and holiness of GOD, (by means of the law) thereby discovers the exceeding sinfulness of sin, not only in our outward actions, but even in our secret thoughts: we are thereby made sensible of the sin of our nature; we are brought to see sin in our best actions, and to see that GOD's law requires a perfect righteousness.

Now the poor soul begins to strive earnestly to make amends for what is past, and to redeem the time. The most solemn vows and resolutions, perhaps, are made to be more watchful and diligent for the future; but, alas! in these resolutions he has failed so often, that he begins now to think, that there is no mercy for him; that GOD has given him up to a reprobate mind.—Hope declines; convictions grow stronger and stronger; destruction seems inevitable:—he sees no possibility of deliverance at hand, without faith; and yet finds himself without a power to believe.

Let me ask, Was it so with you? Was you ever convinced of sin? Did you ever groan under the guilt of sin? How was you delivered from it? I do not ask how long did your convictions last, nor how deep was your distress. This is not the same in all; nor are convictions of any other use than to make us willing to be saved by mere grace and mercy. He who was never wounded, can have no need for a cure. He who never had the sentence of  
condemnation

condemnation in himself, can know nothing of the forgiveness of sins. He who was never killed by the Law, was never made alive by the Gospel.—Thus we are made sensible, that the Gospel is the power of GOD to salvation; that the kingdom of GOD is not in word, but in power. Thus we know the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in CHRIST JESUS, when he raised him from the dead; since the same power which raised CHRIST JESUS from the dead, is exerted in the conversion of every soul, who is translated from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of GOD's dear Son.

In order to be convinced of the necessity of a Divine Power in fulfilling the work of faith in any soul, only see what Faith does.

Are you not puzzled and confounded when you read the Scriptures, to see so many inconsistencies and contradictions? Have you not been ready at times to conclude, that it never could come from GOD? Now Faith reconciles all these apparent inconsistencies and contradictions; sees the chain of salvation perfect and entire, and admires the œconomy of redemption as worthy its Divine Author. The Believer finds the Word of GOD so exact a counterpart of what he feels in himself, that he can set his seal to the truth of it: and hence he is satisfied that he does not follow cunningly-devised fables. Many things he may not be able fully to comprehend; yet fully satisfied of the truth and reality of those things which he does, he waits for the accomplishment of this promise, *What ye know not now, ye shall know hereafter.* What but a divine power could thus enlighten the eyes of our understanding, to know what is the hope of our calling, and what the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints?

Again

Again let me appeal to your hearts and consciences, whether you have not at times awful apprehensions of GOD's wrath? whether, at times, your souls are not filled with horror and amazement at the thoughts of death, and of appearing before the bar of GOD? Now Faith takes this away, and reconciles us to the thoughts of death. O precious Faith! What but precious Faith can disarm Death of its terrors, and enable us to rejoice at his near approach? what but precious Faith could have enabled St. Paul to sing that triumphant song, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.* This was one end of CHRIST's dying, *that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death are all their life-time subject to bondage.* Art thou by Faith enabled to discern the LORD's body? to see that he has borne all thy sins in his own body? that he has put them all away by the sacrifice of himself? For this cause, (even because they do not discern the LORD's body, and see that he has finished transgression, and made an end of sin) we have so many weak believers; so many are sickly in their souls: this is the true cause why so many sleep, and decline from the good ways of GOD, and grow lukewarm and indifferent, because *they are not dead to the law by discerning the body of CHRIST.* But Faith delivers from the bondage of the law, and the fear of death.

It is the power of GOD, through faith, which alone can subdue our corruptions, keep us near to the LORD, and restrain us from every evil way.

Let me ask, do you not find that you are led captive by sin, in spite of every resistance you can make? Have  
you

you not often determined in your minds to break off from your besetting sins, and to be more upon your guard for the time to come? but sin has hitherto been your master. Does not this prove the necessity of a Divine Power restraining from evil, and constraining to good? After many years experience, the Apostle found, that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelt no good thing, and that nothing but the power of GOD could keep him, and subdue those corruptions which he still found remaining in him.

It is by a Divine Power that our affections are drawn out after GOD, even by the sweet attractive power and influence of love; for he draws with thè bands of a man, with cords of love.

By nature, we suppose GOD to be some Being removed at an awful distance from us, in that terrible majesty which must strike us with a dreadful blaze of tremendous glory.

By Faith we see all the Glory of the Godhead shining forth through the medium of our own nature—all the Fulness of the Godhead dwelling in the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST—all the Power of the Godhead put into his hands, who is Head over all things, to his Church. Faith sees, that fury is not in him, neither shall his terror make us afraid; that He is a Man in GOD's stead; that He is very God and very Man, but one CHRIST; that in the person of JESUS, all the fulness, the glory, the power of JEHOVAH centers. By looking unto JESUS, and beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the LORD, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD. A sight of his tenderness, his softness, his sufferings; the tenderness, the softness, the sufferings of GOD! begets kindred passions in our souls. Hence, all that sinking of heart, that melting of affection, that self-abasement and abhorrence, which only can arise from a  
manifestation

manifestation of JESUS. O what nearness! O what sweet union does the soul feel, when by Faith it can see JESUS, and say, ' This GOD is my GOD, my JESUS, my All !' When the language of the heart is this, ' For me—for my salvation—He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh—He was made sin for me, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.—Here was mercy—O that I could love him more! Here is judgment—O the faithfulness of GOD! O the severity of his justice! He spared not his own Son—but he spared me—that sentence which passed on me, was executed upon Him—who thereby brought judgment to victory, spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, and having purged away my sins in his own body, he for ever sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high—once crucified, now exalted, a Prince and a Saviour—the Lamb of GOD, who stands upon mount Zion, as one that once was slain, but now reigning gloriously.'

Thus, we who were afar off, are brought nigh by the blood of CHRIST:—no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and the household of GOD. St. Paul gives us a very striking representation of the difference between the Law and the Gospel; between works and grace; by the difference between mount Sinai; where the law was given, as the ministrations of death; and the mount Zion, from whence the law of faith, of life, of love, of liberty, proceeds. Heb. xii. 18. "*Ye (speaking to believers) are not come unto the mount that may be touched, (mount Sinai) and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice, they that heard, intreated, that the word should not be spoken to them any more*

(for they could not enaure that which was commanded; and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake); but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to GOD the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to JESUS the Mediator of the covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Hither the believer is come in the spirit of his mind: he is passed from death unto life: he has been at that terrible mountain of which the Apostle speaks, and there he received the sentence of death in himself. But now the thunder roars no more, hushed by the still small voice of Peace. Flashes of lightning now no more affright the trembling soul, for Sinai's fiery darts are quenched in JESU's blood: a heavenly calm succeeds: only the heart, sorrowful, yet rejoicing—affected now with love and grief, pours out the sadly pleasing sigh, whilst tears of joy express its sweet relentings.

You, perhaps, would wish to go to heaven; but why? what do you know of heaven? you wish for you know not what. What conception can you form of heaven? In what can you suppose the happiness of heaven to consist? You will answer, perhaps, that no one possibly can tell in this life.—I confess that the believer knows but very little of the joys of heaven: yet, blessed be GOD for that little. It is true, *we know but in part*; yet something we certainly do know—by taste and feeling—for we have the pledge of our inheritance in our hearts till the time of the purchased possession: therefore the Apostle prays that the Ephesians *may be able to comprehend with all*

*all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of CHRIST, that passeth knowledge, i. e. to know it by taste and feeling; though the dimensions of GOD's everlasting love in CHRIST JESUS to poor sinners, infinitely surpass our comprehension, yet the truth and reality of that love is experienced in the soul, being apprehended and enjoyed by faith. We taste the streams, though we cannot fully comprehend the source from whence they flow, nor fathom that immense ocean of ultimate glory to which they direct their course, and in which they at last will terminate—when the Son shall deliver up his mediatorial kingdom, his elect being all called in, and GOD shall be All in all. Though it never can enter into the heart of a natural man to conceive those things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him, yet, says the Apostle, He has revealed them to us by his SPIRIT. —2 Cor. i. 22. the Apostle says, that GOD has given us the earnest of the SPIRIT: and again, chap. v. 5. He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is GOD, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the SPIRIT. Now the Earnest is part of the payment of a greater sum, in order to insure the remainder; therefore, says the Apostle, having received the Earnest, we are always confident; not with a presumptuous confidence, like those who rush as a mad horse into the battle, but with a confidence grounded upon the Experience of GOD's Love to our souls, and the Testimony of GOD's SPIRIT with our spirits: and with this, says the Apostle, I am willing to die; nay, I had rather die than live: willing (says he) rather to be absent from the body, and present with the LORD.*

If he had not known his LORD, whence could have sprung this desire in his soul, to have been for ever with Him? *But I know (says he) in whom I have believed.*



This was all the Apostle's heaven and happiness—this is the heaven and happiness of the redeemed for ever and ever—to know—to enjoy—and to be for ever with their LORD. In proportion to our knowledge and enjoyment of CHRIST, we have an heaven upon earth; for in the knowledge and enjoyment of HIM, lies all the heaven and happiness we expect hereafter.

Let me appeal to your consciences, is not this the only reason why you wish to go to heaven, namely, that you may not go to hell? You have so little knowledge of heaven, and so little is your desire of going thither, that, if it was left to your own choice, you would be well content to give up your chance of heaven, if you was sure of not going to hell. Nay, in your own estimation, the chances against you are so great, that, if it was left to your choice, you had rather be annihilated, than run the risque of taking your trial at the bar of GOD. Hence a certain gloom hangs upon your mind, which you cannot possibly get rid of. One expedient after another is tried, in order to remove it. However any of them may seem to answer for a time, yet, when the novelty ceases, disgust follows—dissatisfied with yourself, an universal dissatisfaction ensues—however this gloom may seem to be lost in company and conversation, in the hurry of business, or in a round of diversions and amusements, yet it will again return; and the truth of the wise man's proverb will be experienced, who said, *That in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and that the end of mirth is heaviness.*

And what perhaps may appear more surprizing to yourself, and to the world in general, is, that you have lived in the habits of religion, and yet are a stranger to that blessed and glorious Hope in which some have been enabled

bled to rejoice firm to the end, in all ages of the Church. This is a stumbling-stone and rock of offence, at which all are sure to stumble when they first set out in the religious life; and that is, seeking righteousness as it were by the works of the law. Not seeing where their righteousness lies, and that ~~the~~ righteousness belongeth only to the LORD, and is theirs only by faith in him, they go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and will not submit to the righteousness of GOD by faith.

There is every thing in CHRIST which a poor soul can want or wish—in him there is all that rest and peace to be enjoyed, which in vain is sought for out of him. All that GOD requires of us—is to leave ourselves in his hands—to do him the justice to believe, that He will be as good as his word—that if we cast our burden upon him, He will sustain it—and if we come to him, He will not cast us out: that He hath put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself—that his righteousness is unto all, and upon all that believe—that if we commit ourselves to him, He will bring every thing to pass—that in him we are accepted—in him we are complete—in him we are perfect lacking nothing—that in him we have eternal life; so that nothing can ever separate us from him.—This is our rest—this is our refreshing. *In returning and rest, says the LORD, shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.* What confidence?—a confidence in CHRIST—that He has done all things well—that it lies upon him to take care of us—and that, for this purpose, all power, in heaven and in earth, is put into his hands.

You, who have been seeking rest and finding none—  
 you, who have been wearying yourselves in very vanities  
 —you, who are distressed in mind, discontented, and dis-  
 satisfied

satisfied with yourselves—you, who have groaned, being burdened with a load of guilt,—to you, is the word of this Salvation sent. Sinners—as Sinners—are invited to take the peace the Gospel brings; for to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; so that ~~that~~ that believeth, is justified from all things.

The grand delusion by which the god of this world deceives and blinds the eyes of men, is by persuading them that they have some fancied power and goodness in themselves; and from not seeing the extent and spirituality of GOD's law, they go about to establish their own righteousness; not seeing, that what they call righteousness, in the sight of GOD, is unrighteousness. Righteousness must be a perfect conformity to the moral law—Unrighteousness therefore must be a want of conformity; no matter how near it may come to the standard; yet, if it falls short, in the least degree, it is unrighteousness; and all unrighteousness is sin.

Woe be to them who can take pleasure in the best action they ever did—they lie under a strong delusion, and believe a lye. If we would judge ourselves, says the Apostle, we should not be judged by the LORD.—The trembling sinner, who comes, self-convicted, and self-condemned, shall not go away without an answer of peace; but he who justifies himself, according to his own words, and upon his own terms, must be condemned; for GOD will judge every man according to his ways. *He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself, shall be abased.* The self-justiciary condemns GOD; GOD therefore is bound to plead his own cause; for he will be justified in his sayings, and in all his proceedings, and will be found clear when he is judged.

The

The charge which Elihu brought against Job was this, “that he justified himself;” whereby he is said, to add rebellion to sin; but, says the same Elihu, “*any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, he will deliver his soul from going down to the pit, and his life shall see the light.*”

The whole world is guilty before GOD;—the Gospel proclaims peace and pardon;—all that remains for you, is to come in and plead your pardon.—Your peace is *now* made—your pardon is already obtained—and every act of your’s, in order to make your peace, procure a pardon, or in any respect to recommend yourselves to GOD, is an act of rebellion and resistance, in direct opposition to the free Grace of GOD, which calls upon the sinner to return, without money and without price, without any previous conditions, qualifications, and pre-requisites.

“ Nothing ye in exchange can give!  
 “ Leave all ye have and are behind;  
 “ Freely the gift of GOD receive,  
 “ Pardon and peace in JESUS find.”

Commending you to GOD, and to the riches of his grace, I am, with earnest prayer for the welfare and prosperity of your souls, and for the success of this mission,

Your willing servant in the Gospel of our dear  
 LORD JESUS CHRIST,

JOHN BRADFORD.

Spa-fields Chapel, London,  
 Feb. 18, 1788.

F I N I S:

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